1 Seligmann & Seligmann E-8 (1907-1908) 1911
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for the Sinhalese of Potuliyadde, receiving every fifth calf that is born. The community has, or recently had, ten or more head of cattle of their own and have sold bulls to the brother-in-law of our *tavalam*[1] leader for as much as 30 Rs., indeed, our *tavalam* leader stated that he had himself visited the Danigala chena and had also seen the cattle. On this occasion Kaira and his sons wore a coloured cloth as the Sinhalese do and their women wore a *kambaya* and coloured breast handkerchief. Mr Bibile was able to confirm some of these statements from his own knowledge and on making investigations among the local villagers discovered that there was a whole community living on the chena settlement, some of whom had married Sinhalese. Indeed it appeared that not only have members of this community learnt to play the part of professional primitive man, but there has even been specialisation, for as far as we could learn, the men we met at the look-out hut are those who always receive visitors or come to Bibile when sent for, while the others whom we did not see do not pose as wild Veddas. Probably the part they now play had only recently crystallised into a professional rôle, but it must be remembered that so long ago as 1863 Bailey discussing these Veddas, or their fathers, says "they were brought in from the forests to be 'looked at'" and he adds, "I never saw that contempt for money which Tennant supposes is still existing'."[2]

Kovil Vanamai. In the Eastern Province in the neighbourhood of Devulani tank the Kovil Vanamai Veddas are found, this term being applied to a number of groups of Veddas living in this neighbourhood. The name Kovil Vanamai means temple precincts and seems to have arisen from there being one or more temples in this part of the country, while some of these shrines are traditionally associated with Veddas, apparently with old settled coast and village Veddas, for we have no reason to think that the ancestors of the folk we saw at Bandaraduwa, or the other wilder Veddas of fifty years ago, were in any way guardians of the temples or dependent on their bounty. Although at the present day the Kovil Vanamai Veddas are represented by scattered groups, for the most part

[1] A *tavalam* is a train of pack bulls.

[2] Bailey, *op. cit.* p. 285.

1;Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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115 putation when he first joined our party, but it was very soon evident that he was handier, quicker and more intelligent in every way than the other peasant Sinhalese with whom we came in contact. Still later we discovered that by his influence a large clearing had been illegally made in a remote part of the jungle near Nuwaragala, and that on account of this he was doing his best to prevent our coming in contact with the Sitala Wanniya Veddas in whose territory the clearing had been made. Although in this he played us false and caused much needless trouble we found him in other matters a perfectly trustworthy witness, and as he had associated more or less constantly with the Kovil Vanamai Veddas from the age of 10 to 20, there is every reason 161 to accept his account of their condition 25 years ago. At this 221 time there were about 50 families, i.e. some 200 people, who led 621 a wandering hunting life for half of the year, during which time they lived in rock shelters and depended largely on honey; for the rest of the year they paid more or less attention to chena cultivation, growing especially maize and *kurakhan* (*Eleusine coracana*). Two or three families—not necessarily the same year after year—would usually wander and hunt together; such groups of families might also make chenas together, though five or six families would often join to make a single chena.

222 Although they had a few guns even 20 years ago, bows and 411 arrows were in common use and much of their hunting consisted 423 of monkey drives. There were no mixed Sinhalese and Vedda 621 chenas then. The Arachi remembers three caves belonging to the ancestors of the present Bandaraduwa Veddas, viz. Walimbagalagalge, Eliavellagalge and Vianbendegalge. Each family was the recognised possessor of one or more rocky hills on which there were colonies of the rock bee, but the whole of the small hunting community would join to collect honey from each hill and the honey was always equally shared.

614 The Kovil Vanamai Veddas belonged to Morane and Unapane and Uru *waruge*. The latter lived apart near Uniche, i.e. between Tumpalamcholai and the coast. The Arachi states 197 that the language has altered during the last 20 years, Tamil tending to displace Sinhalese, thus *tirakodoi*, "nothing," is said

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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they had been called upon to pay a chena tax as well as 1·50 Rs. per adult male road tax. Of course they were unable to collect this money and they dreaded the ensuing penalty, that of serving on the roads, for should the two young men leave the settlement the old man and woman and the girl must starve, the first being too old to work and the woman a cripple. Their plight would have been just as bad had the young man gone to work on some Sinhalese rice fields in order to earn the money[1].

Degenerate Veddas in the neighbourhood of the main Badulla-Batticaloa road[2]. The main road from Badulla to the east coast passes through country that was once the centre of the Vedirata, and on either side of it at a distance of some 2—6 miles are various settlements of half-bred and degenerate Veddas who will soon be entirely lost among the Sinhalese. Plate XIV, figure 1, represents two men of this class: it is obvious that the young man would pass for a Sinhalese, indeed in spite of his bow and arrows and traditional scanty Vedda garb the condition of his hair shows that he has at least been following a Sinhalese mode of life. It is possible that the whole Vedda get-up may have been assumed for our benefit, though in view of the comparative skill with which he handled his bow we do not think this likely. The old man was doubtless one of the last degenerate Veddas of the district.

Before passing to village Veddas a word must be said concerning the Omuni folk and those of Unuwatura Bubula. Sir James Emerson Tennant, in his work *Ceylon* published in 1859, states that Mr Atherton, A.G.A., in conjunction with the Wesleyan Methodist Missionaries, attempted to civilise the Veddas[3]. In 1838 "cottages were built for them in their own district, rice land assigned to them, wells dug, coconuts planted, two communities were speedily settled at Vippammadvo." A

[1] This is a not uncommon practice at the present day.

[2] This road is only some forty or fifty years old, Mr Warren tells me that "the old road from Badulla to Batticaloa joined the road from Alutnuwara. It crossed the present east road about Kallodi and must have worked its way in the neighbourhood of the present road to Tampalancholai and so to the ferry into Batticaloa." Part of this track is still used as a short cut. "There was another road from Passera through Madagama past Makalandiyawewa to Mandur; *tawilees* travel that way now."

[3] Tennant, *op. cit.* Vol. II, p. 447.

1: Seligmann and Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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177 621 797 school was founded and two other settlements fromed at Oomany and Villengelavelly. However, the enterprise was soon abandoned owing to the misconduct of some of the teachers. "But," continues Tennant, "the good effects of even this temporary experiment were apparent; not one of the Veddas returned to his cave and savage habits... The other colony at Oomany continues to the present day prosperous and successful, twenty-five families are resident around it, rice and other grains are produced in sufficiency and coconuts are planted near the cottages. The only desertions have been the departures of those in search of employment, who have removed to other villages in quest of it. The school was closed in 1847 owing to there being no more children at the time requiring instruction..."

177 62 The colony can no longer be called "prosperous and successful," indeed, we found it in a state of semi-starvation. Before 1838, when these people were induced to settle, there can be little doubt that they were living in a somewhat similar condition to the Sitala Wanniya Veddas of the present day, but since then there has been a considerable infusion of foreign blood, for it has long been the habit of criminals and others desirous of concealment, to seek refuge with the village Veddas, who usually receive them kindly and accept them as members of their community. Since the artificial origin of this settlement is known it cannot be regarded as belonging to the village Veddas, but rather to a colony of degenerate settled Veddas.

511 687 Omuni. At Maha Oya three half-bred Veddas from Omuni were seen who had been brought in by the Sinhalese headman to work on the road as they had not paid their "road tax." It was unnecessary for them to plead they were poor and hungry, for their miserable condition showed this all too clearly. Happily Mr. S. W. Woodhouse, the district judge, was then in Maha Oya and realising that while these men were absent from their village, their women and children would be in a worse plight than ever, he excused them their tax and sent them back to Omuni. About a week later we visited Omuni and although we were met with the customary gift of honey to which were added a few berries, it was obvious that the settlement was really short of food and this in spite of a number of families having left some

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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and "tame" Veddas, and to come to more recent times, there is evidence that a hundred years ago there were organized communities of house-building Veddas, while certain Veddas received grants of land from the Sinhalese kings, and on these lived as definite village communities until quite recently, probably till within the last half century.

Village Veddas of Uva Bintenne.

Dambani. The present community of Dambani, in the jungle between Kallodi and Alutnuwara, may serve as an example of a village Vedda community. Some twenty families living in tolerably built houses keep buffaloes and cultivate chena, the latter being big enough not only to supply their own wants, but to permit of a lively trade with Sinhalese traders. These Dambani folk have been known to the Arachi of Belligala as a flourishing community in the same social condition for the last thirty years, and he states that they were in this condition in his father's time. A short visit was sufficient to show that here was a community which, though it had lost many Vedda beliefs, still retained others, and was so strong and independent that there was little likelihood of its immediate fusion with the surrounding population. Physically these people (Plate XV, figure 2), though somewhat darker and often of a stouter build than the Danigala Veddas, could not be mistaken for Sinhalese. The Dambani people are unfortunately "show" Veddas, that is to say, people who have been sent for so often by white visitors that they have learnt certain tricks, which they show off directly they see a European, and so constantly demand presents that serious work with them is an impossibility.

A positive advantage which has, however, arisen from this condition, is that these folk have kept up the remains of the so-called Vedda language. The headman in whose district these Veddas are situated is largely responsible for this, for he always speaks to them in their own dialect in harsh tones. He is an extremely kind old man, and answers definite questions perfectly truthfully, yet like so many Sinhalese, he generally says only what he thinks is expected of him, hence, the belief in the fierce sullen ways of the Veddas and their inability to laugh has been

1;Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5

sparse undergrowth, so that it was an ideal place for a camp, within easy distance of water. They may remain at this place three or four months, or even longer, before they seek a new village site, but probably they never go far from Horabora tank, on account of the great supply of lotus and other seeds which the lake affords.

"None of them is tattooed, and they wear very few ornaments. Both sexes, however, perforate the lobe of the ear, and through the opening pass a wire, strung with beads or seeds. The women sometimes enlarge this perforation, and wear in it a plug, made by rolling a strip of palm leaf into a cylinder, from one half to an inch in diameter.

"We got from them one of their earthen bowls that had rough patterns drawn upon it, but saw no other evidence of artistic ability. They make coarse mats and baskets of reeds and strips of bamboo, and use gourds and coconut shells for water bottles and cups. Spoons and ladles they make from a piece of coconut shell, with two holes, on one side, and a stick thrust through them to form a handle[1]."

Village Veddas of Tamankaduwa.

There are a number of communities of village Veddas in Tamankaduwa, all of which show marked evidence of intermarriage with the Sinhalese and Tamils.

Elakotaliya. There is a large Vedda chena here, but most of its inhabitants were away at the time of our visit, those present appeared distinctly half-bred. Their mode of life is similar to that prevalent at Dambani and Bulugahaladena, i.e. they are occupied in chena cultivation, cattle rearing, and do a little hunting, but as they have not specially preserved it for show purposes they have forgotten the Vedda dialect. However, they remember their *waruge* and practise exogamy; they also reverence the Nae Yaku.

Kalukalaeba. Another settlement was seen at Kalukalaeba, here were about twelve mud huts, all empty on our arrival, as it was the harvesting season and the people had gone to live

[1] "Notes of a trip to the Veddas of Ceylon." *Bulletin of the Free Museum of Science and Art of the University of Pennsylvania*, Vol. III, 1901.

1;Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5

105 on their chena. We waited here a little while and two Veddas
●621 passed, one carrying a gun; we asked them to return to their chena and fetch some of the other villagers. Soon some twenty
[431] men and about as many women and children arrived bringing us presents of honey, pumpkins and sweet potatoes. Scarcely any of them presented the Vedda type, they were all distinctly larger and more heavily built. Except their knowledge of their *waruge* and recognition of the Nae Yaku all remains of Vedda customs seemed to have been lost.

Yakure. The inhabitants of Yakure, a village about six miles from Kalukalaeba, call themselves Veddas, though physically (Plate XVI, figure 1) they would pass as Tamils or mixed
[194] Tamils and Sinhalese, and show even less evidence of Vedda blood than do the Kalukalaeba people. Their village consists of about 40 mud houses and is compactly built; a great number of cattle was seen grazing outside the confines of the village. Like the Kalukalaeba folk they know their *waruge* and invoke the Nae Yaku, but they have a temple, a simple mud hut, and worship a number of Sinhalese gods. Some men (Plate XVI, figure 2) from a village called Ulpota near Gunner's Quoin were
[197] seen here who also appeared to have mixed blood; they knew the "Vedda language," that is to say we were able to get from them about the same number of words as we obtained at Dambani. When one of them was asked when this dialect was used he replied "only when we are sent for by the Government
[191] agent or any other white man." Among themselves they speak Sinhalese though they can also speak Tamil as it is largely the language of Tamankaduwa.

Rotawewa. There is a settlement of alleged Veddas at Rotawewa about six miles from Minerriya tank. Concerning these we were told that they cultivated rice, and were in no respect different from the neighbouring Sinhalese, while Mr Jayawardene writes: "There is only one village of Veddas in Sinhala Pattu of Tamankaduwa District, and that village is Rotawewa, about six miles from Minerriya. These Veddas lived on the chase and subsequently took to chena clearings, and when the place began to be frequented by the low-country Sinhalese and other traders, some of them were able to sell their meat to them and

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5

they saved a little money and bought a patch of land of about 11 acres from Government, which land they now cultivate with paddy.... There are sixteen houses in the Vedda Settlement of Rotawewa, and the householders in every case are descendants of Veddas. They are Sinhalese without any signs of Tamil admixture."

They say they are of the Morane *warige*, and they seem not to know any other *warige*. Mr Horsburgh however states that "there is one other Vedda village in Sinhala Pattuwa besides Rotawewa, viz. Gallinda, with about three families who are the same people as those of Rotawewa."

As a matter of convenience we have prepared a tabular summary of the conditions prevailing at the various settlements of wild and village Veddas that we visited. Besides those mentioned, many other families and even isolated individuals exist scattered throughout the Vedirata, especially in the neighbourhood of the Badulla-Batticaloa road near Maha Oya and Kallodi. These folk are in the last stage of degeneration, having given up their own wandering life and habits; they have mostly drifted into Sinhalese villages there to die out miserably.

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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such favourite names as Kaira, Poromala and Handuna leads to confusion, not only in the minds of strangers, but also we believe in the minds of the Veddas themselves.

Sinhalese who come in contact with the Veddas find the same difficulty, and the individuals of certain communities, e.g. Danigala, have each a Sinhalese name by which they are known to the peasant Sinhalese, and which in many instances they themselves recognise, so that some Veddas actually know each other by these Sinhalese names, and give them when asked their own names or those of their companions. This is the explanation of the majority of Sinhalese names occurring in the genealogies. Again, the fact that among the Veddas there is no system of hereditary chieftainship, or any other custom such as the vendetta, forcing a man to know and remember his grandfathers, cannot but have assisted to bring about the forgetfulness of previous generations, which with the rarest exceptions makes everyone entirely ignorant of his grandparents. In the case of the Danigala and Henebedda Veddas there was an additional difficulty to be met in conducting our investigations. The men of these communities who for the most part belonged to the Morane and Unapane clans, traditionally the proudest and most important of the Vedda *warugé*, had to a certain extent intermarried with Sinhalese and also with the Veddas of Namadewa clan, a *warugé* which in this part of the country is regarded as of inferior status. They are most anxious to conceal instances of both these classes of marriage and lied freely concerning them and this is the reason for certain lacunae in their genealogies, which in the case of the Danigala community could not have been given at all had not Mr Bibile's position as Ratemahatmaya, i.e. hereditary overlord or "laird" of this part of the country, enabled him to make inquiries from the surrounding peasantry, and thus check, and in many instances correct, the information we obtained from the Veddas themselves.

A Vedda community consists of from one to five families who share the rights of hunting over a tract of land, of gathering honey upon it, fishing its streams, and using the rock shelters. But the whole of the community does not commonly move about its territory as one band, it is far more common to find only the

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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members of single families or small groups of two families living and hunting together.

Each family consists of parents and unmarried children to whom are generally added married daughters and their husbands. It is rare to find a married son with his father and mother, and a widow often marries the brother of her dead husband. We may now give some examples of the communities we actually met, premising that where a community such as that of Godatalawa consists of a single family only, this is probably due to depopulation and "hard times."

By consulting the genealogies on pp. 60 and 61 it will be seen that the Godatalawa family consisted of an old white haired man, Handuna, the "senior" of the group, his wife Dilisini, their daughter Kumi, a girl scarcely past puberty, and another daughter, Mutumenike, whom we did not see. Besides these there were Kaira (Hudubandar) and Kaira (Vinake), both sons of the old man's sister Hudi, and therefore actual or potential sons-in-law, and the two young children of the dead Ukumenike, a daughter of Handuna by his first wife Dingerimenike.

The Sitala Wanniya community when we first met them consisted of two families, those of Handuna the "senior" of the group, and his half brother Vela. Handuna had with him his wife Tandi and his two boys, his married daughter Kandi, and her husband Kaira with his sister Selli and the two young children born to Kaira and Kandi. Vela had only his wife Bevini (sister of Tandi) and his two young children. After a few days they were joined by another family consisting of Nila and his wife Wiri, with their daughter and her husband Paema, an unmarried girl and a small boy. The relationship between Handuna and Nila was that their grandmothers were sisters and their mother and father cousins who reciprocally called each other *akka* (elder sister) and *maleya* (younger brother).

Kinship.

The system of kinship was studied by means of the genealogies, and the following list of relationship terms compiled from the genealogies shows that the Vedda system of

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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582 601 Since the children of two brothers or two sisters cannot marry each other, they are not *ikwa* and *mama* but call each other "brothers" and "sisters," using the terms for elder or younger brother or sister according to their age[1].

621 224 606 (Every Vedda so readily helps all the other members of his community and shares any game he may kill or honey he may take in so liberal a manner that at first it was difficult to determine who were the individuals who had a special claim on others of the group. Certainly at first sight it seemed as if all game were equally divided among the members of the group, but after a little time we perceived that while an unmarried man looked especially after his mother, a married man's father-in-law had at least an equal claim on his son-in-law and in practice often received more attention, since a man generally spent most of his time with his wife's family.) That the relationship between 606 father-in-law and son-in-law is very close was shown in a number of ways, thus, when discussing children and their bringing up with Handuna of Sitala Wanniya, we asked him whether Veddas [842] preferred to have a son or a daughter, the answer was prompt and decided, "a daughter, for thus a man obtains a son-in-law"; and on another occasion when discussing relationship he stated very decidedly, *anuna mama ekai*, mother and mother's brother (i.e. father-in-law) are alike, and pointed out that as a man treats

[1] It may be worth while to say something concerning the alleged intermarriage of brother and sister among the Veddas, since Bailey and Hartshorne believed that such marriages occurred, and the Sarasins considered further investigation advisable. Our conclusions agree so thoroughly with Nevill's that we feel that we need do no more than quote what he has written on this subject. "Much nonsense has been written by persons who ought to have known better, about marriage of Veddas with their sisters. Such incest never was allowed, and never could be, while the Vaedda customs lingered. Incest is regarded as worse than murder. So positive is this feeling, that the Tamils have based a legend upon the instant murder of his sister, by a Vaedda to whom she had made undue advances. The mistake arose from crass ignorance of Vaedda usages. The title of cousin with whom marriages ought to be contracted, that is, mother's brother's daughter, or father's sister's daughter, is *naga* or *nangi*. This in Sinhalese is applied to a younger sister. Hence if you ask a Vaedda, 'Do you marry your sisters?' the Sinhalese interpreter is apt to say, 'do you marry your naga?' The reply is (I have often tested it), 'yes—we always did formerly, but now it is not always observed.' You say then, 'What? marry your own sister naga?' and the reply is an angry and insulted denial, the very question appearing a gross insult: and if put by a Sinhalese, the Vaedda would probably not even reply to him, but turn away with a gesture of contempt." *Taprobanian*, Vol. 1, 1886, p. 178.

Things new to them which we showed

152 [522] them often provoked peals of laughter; to see the eldest and most venerable man solemnly have his thumb nail pressed by a brass machine (algometer) was particularly amusing to the rest of the community, one man actually rolling on the ground with laughter. The old man took it all in excellent part and smiled indulgently. Doubtless Veddas vary much in character, but all except the "show" Veddas are genial and courteous, and have always been rightly considered truthful. At Sitala 153 Wanniya Handuna was the most intelligent man, keenly in- 554 terested in all the new things we showed him; he obviously 156 ruled the community by force of character, coupled with the fact that he was a shaman. Nila, however, was also a shaman, but he was obviously not so strong a man as Handuna, to whose opinion he deferred, and naturally took second place. Vela, half-brother of Handuna, was extremely shy but by no means stupid, he generally tried to get out of doing things, professing inability, but when urged by Handuna did everything as well as the other men. Kaira, *baena* (son-in-law) to Handuna, was intelligent and talkative and inclined to be boastful. Pema, *baena* to Nila, did not speak much, chiefly we thought because he was a young man and had not much to tell, for although he did not chatter like Kaira he smiled and did not hang his head when addressed, as Vela did.

342 Whether staying in a "private" or "communal" cave the 592 family life continues in much the same manner. If in a com- 621 munal cave, each family keeps strictly within its own limits, 423 the women may always be seen at exactly the same spot, and when the men come in they sit or lie beside their wives, keeping to that part of the cave floor that belongs to them as carefully as though there was a partition dividing it from that of their neighbours. Figure 2 is a plan of Pihilegodagalge showing the actual division of floor space. Food is frequently 621 cooked by one woman and shared by all the members of 422 the community, in fact, although it might be cooked separately, it did not seem that any food was private property. One other fact was very noticeable in communal caves, namely, that men never kept their bows and arrows in their own division, but always put them all together in a particular

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5

place. The "arsenal" at Bendiyagalge is well seen in Plate XIX, figures 1 and 2, while at Pihilegodagalge all the bows and arrows were rested on an old ant heap in the centre of the cave.

Though men do sometimes dig for yams, hunting is essentially their work, and yams were usually dug by the women who also do the cooking. This is of the simplest kind; yams are roasted in ashes, in which way meat may also be cooked, while practically everything else is boiled in a pot over three stones. Many Veddas also know how to cook curry, and deer's flesh is dried on a rack and smoked. A rack is built usually in a sunny place, the meat is put on this and a smoky fire kept burning beneath it, the flesh is thus dried in the sun and smoked simultaneously. This process is usually superintended by men.

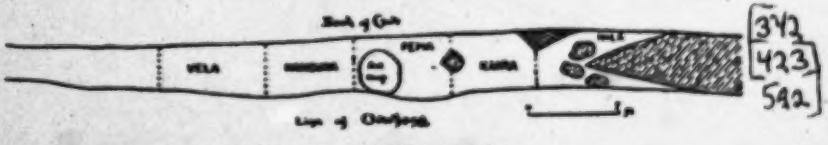

Fig. 1. Plan of Pihilegodagalge.

Plate XVII, figure 1, shows a rack built to smoke meat on the top of the Bendiyagalge rock-mass.

A Vedda will never sleep on the ground if there is any rock upon which he can lie. If he has a deerskin or a piece of cloth he will lie on it, if not he does not seem to object to the cold rock, and so avoids contact with the ground damp from the heavy dews. He always keeps a small fire burning beside him; this was noticed by Nevill, who says: "A Vaedda never sleeps without a smouldering fire by his side. I am assured, should accident oblige them to do so, they have usually died from a fever caught by the omission[1]."

The Veddas are strictly monogamous, and we were able to confirm Bailey's observations as regards their marital fidelity. "Their constancy to their wives is a very remarkable trait in their character in a country where conjugal fidelity is certainly not classed as the highest of domestic virtues. Infidelity,

[1] *Taprobanian*, Vol. 1, Aug. 1886, p. 187.

To illustrate and prove these propositions we must examine in detail the beliefs of some of the communities in which each stage is respectively dominant. The Veddas met at Godatalawa and Sitala Wanniya form the best example of the first stage of belief. In comparing their beliefs it must, however, be remembered that the Godatalawa family have drifted away from their hunting grounds and are in dire want, and that their oldest man and leader (now quite infirm though still mentally vigorous) was never a shaman and consequently could give only the lay opinion of his group on religious matters. It must then not be assumed that no spirits beyond the *Nae Yaku*, Kande Yaka, and Bilindi Yaka were known to the shaman of the Galmeda community, although the fact that the laymen only knew of these spirits shows how vastly more important they were than any other.

The Sitala Wanniya people, on the other hand, were living in a condition which must have been general from ancient times up to about 70 years ago. Four of the five families had never made even rough chena or built bark houses, but lived on game, honey and yams and wandered about from rock-shelter to rock-shelter within their territory.

At Godatalawa Kande Yaka and Bilindi Yaka were both known though they were not recognised as brothers, and Kande Yaka was said to be greater than all other *yaku*. They are the two principal *yaku* invoked in order to obtain game, but with them there are invoked three other *yaku*, who, it was stated, are not the spirits of the dead but have existed as *yaku* from the beginning. These were, however, of little importance, and our informant, an old man the senior of the group but not a shaman, did not remember their names. Kande Yaka and Bilindi Yaka would be invoked in order to obtain game at the *hiriboruka* ceremony, or simply when dancing round an arrow struck in the ground. These dances were not in gratitude for game already killed, but when the hunting had been successful, pieces of flesh from the neck and chest of the kill were cooked on the ashes and Kande Yaka and Bilindi Yaka were invoked to come to this offering which a few minutes later would be consumed by the Veddas. If part of the meat were not thus

Seligmann & Seligmann E-6 (1907-1908) 1911
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We found that the Coast Veddas spoke of themselves as Verdas and said that long ago their fathers came from inland. They all speak Tamil, but some assert that they still know, and at times use among themselves, their old Vedda language, but when we asked the men who made this statement to speak in their ancestral dialect they spoke Sinhalese[1]. Besides this a few of the older men know the names of some of the Vedda *warige*, while others are able to trace their descent to them.

The Coast Vedda is darker, taller and more stoutly built than the true Veddas. In fact they generally resemble low caste Tamils, yet in almost every settlement there are one or two men shorter than their comrades and presenting an almost typical Vedda caste of countenance. The women are all much bigger than true Vedda women and would pass for Tamils, after whose fashion they dress.

Plate LXVIII, figs. 1 and 2, represent Verdas from settlements to the north of Kalkudah.

The Verdas build comfortable huts in small clearings, usually within a mile of the sea; they cultivate maize and pumpkins and other easily grown crops round their houses and in patches of clearing in the surrounding jungle.

They have plenty of pots and baskets and also possess drums and fishing gear, so that their mode of life differs but little from that of the poor and low caste Tamils who are their neighbours. One, two, or more rarely, three houses stand in each clearing, and it seems that the people living in each clearing are closely related by blood or connected by marriage.

The chief Verda settlements north of Batticaloa are Pellanchenai near Kalkudah 20 miles from Batticaloa and at Varkanari some 10 miles north of Kalkudah on the far side of the river which is crossed by a ferry at Valarchchenai. At Panichchenkeni some 14 miles further north is another ferry, where the local Verdas act as ferrymen, while there are two other Verda settlements some three miles beyond the ferry at sites called Vellaiade and Kandaladi respectively.

[1] Nevill (loc. cit.) noticed the same state of affairs, he said "Only the old men speak what they call Veddda, which is pure but quaint Sinhalese with a Veddda accent, as a rule, though mixed with some words characteristic of true Veddda."

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123 We had hardly gained the base of the rock when we heard human
[411 voices and soon came up with three men and their dogs. One fellow
412 carried a gun, the others had axes hitched to their shoulders. They were on their way to a devil dancing ceremony at a house of illness some miles away; but abandoning their project they accompanied us to their homes.

621 In a small clearing stood half a dozen leafy shelters. Outside one of
[342] these, three women with infants at the breast were seated roasting small yellow flowers. The rest of their people were at work on a *chena** close
[162] by. We summoned them and soon we had all the Veddas of the *Kosgah*
[164] *Ulpotta* before us—some six or eight men and about a dozen women and
[164] children. They were a poor lot bearing the stigmata of malaria and
[146] framboesia. There was but one old man among them. The children were emaciated and languid.

144 Most of them showed strong traces of Tamil admixture, especially
177 the women; what poor ornaments they wore, their clothing, and even their very names were Tamil; and so were their predilections if the coy smiles one or two of them bestowed on the fine Tamil that accompanied us signified anything. There were at least three men, however, true to
142 Vedda type—short of stature, wild-eyed, with beardless face and up-standing frizzly hair.

411 They had no bows among them, except as playthings for the children,
524 but made us one as a memento and stained it with charcoal and *thimbiri* to give it the appearance of use.

342 The huts were fashioned of wattle and leaves, and thatched with dry
415 grass. Their domestic appointments comprised earthen pots, a wooden pestle and mortar, bark rope, and a deer skin or two.

262 Fruits, flowers, wild yams, honey, the flesh of animals, *kurrukhan*†
224 and maize formed their food. The meat they fancied most was that of
231 the langur and monitor lizard which they hunted with the lazy mongrels that loitered about. They eat abundantly and at any hour when food
264 is plentiful; but as a rule one good meal a day is all they expect; in
26 times of dearth they bear hunger stoically, chewing incessantly a few
415 varieties of bark they carry in pouches fashioned of cloth saturated with
221 melted wax (*itee rethee*). Partial nomads, they spend many months
222 of the year under trees and in caves. Where the *palu*, *veera*, *kong*, or *mora*‡ fruit is ripe, where the hives are, there they take their women and children, dogs, and chattels and go.

515 "How often do you bathe?" I asked one of them, the smell of their ring-wormed bodies suggesting little acquaintance with water.

"What bathing for us," he replied. "We fall into a stream once in a way and get out again; that is our bath. And we only do that when our stomachs are full. When we are hungry we don't care for anything; we can eat even a man then!"

904 In answer to the question how they measured distances and what constituted a mile, the reply was, "We walk till our legs hurt, then we
[276] place our axes on the ground, sit down, take out our pouches, and chew a quid; that is our mile".

*A patch of forest cleared for cultivation

[137] †*Eleusine coracana*

‡*Minusops hexandra, Hemicyclia sepiaria, Schleichera trijuga, Nephelium longana*, respectively.

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Vela was an interesting little chap and, unlike the others, had always something to say for himself. He entertained us with charms, pleasing lullabies, and songs of rock and stream demons that came as fast as *as* leaves shaken by the wind, in the guise of bears, their mouths adrip with human blood. These he sang despite warnings from the others who reminded him that he had sucked a chicken bone, which was a dangerous thing to do before invoking devils lest it invite their anger. [157] 776 [825]

Coming to a pool, brown with decaying leaves, we asked if the water was good. "Very good," said a Vedda, adding the epicurean touch, "Those fallen flowers floating there make the water sweet; they are the flowers that give good honey." 312

It was high noon when Veddas left us to go in search of food. But Vela lingered to tell us of the oppression of the local headman. Did they but catch a young deer or pea-chick that came their way they were prosecuted. The visiting apothecary too was bad; he gave them no medicines except for gifts of honey or meat; and the poor fellows had little enough for themselves. 186

Having visited a cave containing the battered remains of an old Buddha, we continued our circuit of the rock; and after a walk of an hour and a half under a burning sky, came to the Veddas of the *Kudda Ulpotha*. These had no huts of any sort, but merely sat grouped in families under various trees. It was the season of the *kong* fruit, of which there was plenty about. Women were boiling down the luscious pulp with which to make cakes, or extracting from the seeds an oil said to be good for sores and wounds. Very fond of the fruit they all were; it had been their only sustenance for days. One little urchin, his mouth be-ringed with parangi ulcers, was licking clean a coconut shell containing the acrid juice, with a relish worthy of a tastier dish. 621 ● 342 222 252 757 262 164

The patriarch of the settlement, Naida, and his wife were typical Veddas; but here again most of the others showed Tamil admixture. One man had a large scar across his face. The manner he came by it illustrates well the aggressiveness of the little Ceylon sloth-bear. When out collecting honey he saw a she-bear and her cub. Realizing the certain disaster of such an encounter he cautiously climbed a tree; but in doing so snapped a twig and gave himself away. With a series of blood-curdling cries she charged him, and clambering up the tree, bit and clawed him severely. A large flap was torn from his face. This his father sewed up with a thorn and fibre, and doctored with a result that might have done credit to any surgeon. Living as they invariably do in the neighbourhood of rocks, and having kindred tastes in honey, yams, and fruit, the Veddas and bears often encounter each other, as the ugly scars on many of the men testify. [622] 222 [481] [757]

As, footsore and tired, we rounded the southern end of the rock towards evening, we met parties of Veddas returning with basketfuls of *kong* fruit. One youth was up a tree making the jungle ring to his song as he beat down the berries. As it darkened we reached Manampitiya, but not before we had worried a blind old owl that had descended to a streamlet to quench its thirst. 222

It is hard to forget that first experience of the Veddas in their homes: those voices in the jungle, that sight of their huts among the trees, and of their women roasting dainty little flowers for food. 000

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The next noon we were on the river making easy passage with the current all in our favour, and travelling at ten times the speed we had laboured up. The boatmen who had spent the night on the bank looked as if they were afflicted with measles, so remorselessly had the mosquitoes handled them; and already one of them was shivering with malaria.

The heat of noon on the river was intense; and the splash of the oars or the sight of boys bathing at the draw-wells gave little appeasement. No bird had the heart to sing. As we passed, king-fishers flashed out of their cool retreats, coveys of stove-curlew ran up the shoals, and submerged wild buffaloes floundered up the bank. Clusters of yellow butterflies sipped moisture from the wet sand. A brahminy kite, its feet immersed in the shallows, whistled a warning to its mate that answered from afar.

At Kandakadu, where we met the first Vedda and his child, we spent the night; and, having two hours daylight to spare, decided to visit his village, in spite of being advised against it at that hour, as elephants were plentiful. The place was disappointing as regards Veddas; for, instead of the crude huts we hoped to see, we found well built houses with cattle and fowls in plenty; and the inhabitants, though they called themselves Vedda, were Tamils to all appearance. Nevertheless, we saw here a sight we would not have missed. In a field in full view of the village, and bordering a pool where women went for water, were three elephants belly-deep in the tall grass feeding with the indifference of cattle. The forest between this village and the river veritably teemed with traces of elephants.

At the Verugal junction we were greeted by a fine old Arab in baggy breeches and skull-cap. His house, a stout three-storied structure, was designed to stand the stress of floods. When the lower floors were submerged he would remain islanded on the upper which had mud floors to permit of cooking. On the rich silt left in his garden when the waters ebbed, he planted tobacco and the luxuriant vegetables he was now selling our boatmen. A stern man was Mohamed Sultan as he was called. When one of our party cut more sugar-cane than he intended taking, he was brought to his senses quickly enough with a single sentence. The aggrieved one afterwards confided to me that Mohamed was once a notorious robber of Kiniyai where he lived killing and eating other people's cattle!

We rapidly drifted toward the end of our journey, having done in a day and half downstream what we had taken seven days upstream to accomplish. As we reached the river-mouth the mosquito hosts were abroad, a storm threatened, but the fishers of the estuary were unconcernedly hauling their nets to a song.

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115 On our return journey, passing the ruins of a remarkable aqueduct
173 of stone—the Watawala Kandiya—beside the remains of a crumbling
439 bund, we arrived at Kurunduwina where we met a doddering ancient who claimed to have been alive when the British took Ceylon a hundred years ago. It is not often one meets old folk in these unhealthy lands. Here, I thought, was one who could tell us something about Veddas of a type we could not hope to see; for within view of his hut were the Sittala Wanniya hills, the immemorial homes of the Veddas. But his decrepit mind needed much jogging.

"Are there Veddas here?" I shouted twice into his deaf old ears.

"Now none," he said.

"Did they live on the rocks yonder?" I asked. He nodded affirmatively.

"Did they come here to barter?" I persisted. His tired lack-lustre eyes flashed to a memory as he answered with surprising alacrity, "Yes they came. When they had no food they came to exchange honey and hides for food. The Vedda would sit there, place his bow there, his arrows there, and his axe there, and he would ask for betel. If any one stepped over his weapons by chance, he would leap up in anger, bite the piece of human liver he carried in his betel-bag, and ask, 'Who's this that dares to defy me?' The gleam faded from the old man's eye, his weary look returned and he uttered not another word, question as I might.

The shifting *chenas* scattered about these parts make it very difficult to say where a village begins or ends. We were resting on the banks of the Rambukkan, (a course parallel to which we had so far followed) somewhere on the confines of Payile and Idambowa, when to our surprise we saw a Buddhist priest accompanied by the inevitable *abithaya** and a tall, wild, naked fellow. A Vedda of Bingoda the latter was said to be.
[609] We tried to engage him in talk, but he would have none of it; seated on his haunches he stared at us with a hang-dog apathy eloquent of hunger; this melted away in a broad grin as he left us, greedily chewing the handful of muscatels and biscuits we gave him.

The usual route from here to Potuliyadda lay through the village of Mullagama. As this involved a detour we decided on a more direct if less used track; a decision we afterwards regretted as it lost us the interesting Veddas of Bingoda, and incidentally a clue to the discrepancy between Seligmann's statement and local report regarding the Veddas of the "Nuwaragala hills"—a missed opportunity the full significance of which we were only to realise some five years later after miles of
[621] arduous and unnecessary travel. For the present we were told that the Veddas of Bingoda consisted of only three families, and that, though they forsook their huts for caves during the honey season, they were, if anything, less of the real Vedda than those of Henebedde.

Our journey was now an uncertainty; for the guides were doubtful both of the route and the likelihood of water. The jungle, hitherto dense, gave place to an occasional glade. Late in the evening we found ourselves in a spacious *talawa*, rank with tall grass that quite obliterated our path. Here we were benighted, just as we found a pool adequate to our needs. It was an interesting place, a veritable sanctuary, hill-encircled; an ideal

*A neophyte, attendant on a priest.

2. FOREST CHILDREN

●621 THE village of Potuliyadda lies in the heart of the country of the Henebedde Veddas. We had hoped to take these people unawares in their homes some three miles away; but it was not to be; for a Vedda boy who had witnessed our arrival had forestalled us.

We were at lunch, when my friend, whose seat commanded a view of the jungle, quietly remarked, "Hullo; who are these? Veddas without a doubt."

142 157 [411] [622] Five men, armed with bows, arrows and axes, strode in single file under the leadership of a small one-eyed man, half of whose face was covered by an awful scar which puckered an eyeless socket, giving a touch of pathos to an otherwise harsh expression. Such was Poromola, chief of the Henebedde Veddas also called *Walaha* (bear) for obvious reasons. Then there was Handuna a fine type of wild man; though close on fifty his figure was well-knit, and this combined with his goatee beard and tousy head gave a strength and rugged dignity to his bearing. There were also a tall bearded man of forty, loquacious and sophisticated enough when you knew him; a lanky, slouching, beady-eyed fellow; a robust, curly-haired bumpkin; and lastly, the snub-nosed little mischief-maker to whom we owed the honour of this visit.

123 As the Veddas came up to us, they uttered some fierce jargon we did not understand. It was pretty obvious they were acting; and not caring to encourage them in this, I casually motioned them away. They retired mumbling. We recalled them later to find them in dudgeon, evidently not being used to such treatment. They stared mutely at us affecting not to understand a word of the Sinhalese in which I addressed them. I tried again and again, but not by the flicker of an eyelid did they signify comprehension. Civility and persuasion having failed, I tried the effect of candour, telling them that we were not gullible strangers and knew all about them. This also was without effect.

Opening Seligmann's book, which contained the portraits of these very Veddas taken ten years previously, we suited picture to prototype. They gazed uncritically with stolid intentness showing no surprise or enthusiasm. I asked them whether they remembered the author and his wife who had spent so much time with them and been so kind to them. One nodded, and the others' faces betrayed interest. Thus was the first barrier carried.

Gradually we won them over one by one; but despite our best efforts the conversation flagged. And we, tired of making all the advances simulated an indifference we far from felt, and took to our books.

"We are hungry," said Handuna after a while. "Will you not give us food?"

We could only offer them money, an almost useless thing to the Vedda. We had made the serious mistake of coming unprovided with a surplus of rice, betel, arecanut and tobacco; for the surest way to the heart of the Vedda is through his stomach. We

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to a cleft fragment of stone resembling a giant lizard crawling up the sheer face of the rock.

We found Bowala deserted. The young coconut and areca palms, plantains, sugar-canes and pine-apples there were choked with grass and lantana. The huts were falling to pieces and leaked like sieves as we found to our cost when a shower overtook us; the grass thatch, ruined by white ants, was the home of innumerable rats, brahmin-lizards and poisonous *karawalas** that hung head-down from the rafters ready to strike.

The desolate state of the hamlet is explainable by the *chena* life of the people. In December, as the crops ripen, they forsake their homes for the shacks of the *chena*, leaving perhaps an aged couple behind. In April, when the crops of *kurrukkan* and maize have been taken, they return to the village to repair their huts and wean back to life such plants as have survived the inroads of wild animals and weeds. In July, *chena* land is leased again; and so the wasteful routine is repeated. A hamlet occupied for six months and abandoned for six has not much chance of headway. If the population of a village is at all numerous, there are sufficient people to occupy both *chena* and village, without detriment to either; if the community is very small they remain *chena* dwellers with no permanent homes; if intermediate, we find the state of things at Bowala. In favoured places a mere nucleus of human beings swells in time to a thriving and populous village. But in the insalubrious *Vanni* privation and ignorance keep the numbers low. Two dwindling villages may combine to save one from extinction. Often a place populous to-day is a wilderness to-morrow and *vice versa*. This is typical of the kaleidoscopic way the forest hamlets change. Names so fine on maps—Illukpitiya, Mahaella, Embillene—are found when reached to be derelict; a crumbling hut perhaps hidden in jungle, or a hardy tamarind or palmyrah the sole witness of vanished homes.

Bowala folk are better jungle men than many farther inland. Though far from fastidious in their choice of meats, for they eat the mongoose and rat, they abhor the porcupine, sure mark of Vedda ancestry. They fashion bags of beaten *riti* bark and carry pouches of monkey skin that ladies might envy. Their bed-frames are spanned with sambur-hide, their powder flasks are the dried scrota of sambur. A monkey skin, stretched over a coconut shell fitted with handle, screw and string, and manipulated with a small bow, serves them as a violin out of which they scrape mournful disharmonies. They snare the smaller animals, such as the hare, pangolin and chevrotan, with *kabbakas* or weighted frames poised over passages used by these animals; we saw one of these set for chevrotan with a bundle of urine-drenched leaves for bait. Some among them could brave the formidable heights of Westminster Abbey in quest of the combs of the rock bee—the most hazardous of jungle pursuits.

We spent the night in a large cave at the base of Westminster Abbey and made the ascent next morning, replenishing our water bottles at a small basin formed by the buttressing roots of a rock-tamarind and rejoicing in the grandiloquent name, for so trivial a thing, of *Kothuru-pathaha* (gnat-water-hole).

It had rained all night and there was still a drizzle. Squeezing through crevices, crouching through low caves, climbing trees, clinging to rough

*Small venomous snakes.